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# Lincoln The Emancipator

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JOHN L. LOVE



Oh make Thou us, through centuries long,  
In peace secure, in justice strong;  
Around our gift of freedom draw  
The safeguards of Thy righteous law:  
And, cast in some diviner mould,  
Let the new cycle shame the old-

WHITTIER.



# Lincoln The Emancipator

AN  
ADDRESS

BY  
JOHN L. LOVE

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*Delivered Before the Excelsior Club, Guthrie, Okla.,  
February 12, 1909.*

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Lincoln was, first of all, God's man, raised up to meet a great emergency. He might have worn some other name, but without such a leader, it may almost be said, America could not have fulfilled her destiny. -- WILLIAM G. FROST

BY TRANSFER

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21



IT is the clear and indisputable teaching of human history that in all contests between the forces which make for freedom or for truth and those which seek to establish or perpetuate oppression or error, the former ultimately triumph. Clear and important is the lesson also that in all such contests, the friends of freedom, whether of thought or of person, must exercise supreme patience and the largest faith; that, while cherishing and lending the most enthusiastic aid and encouragement to the radical forces which enlist themselves in the cause of liberty, it is prudent also to set high value upon the conservative forces that work to the same end, and even to reckon often the real beneficence of radically hostile forces. It was a far cry from Nero to Constantine, from the Waldensian heretics to Martin Luther, or from the Missouri compromise to the Proclamation of Emancipation. The fires of Smithfield, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the Dred Scott decision were not intended to infuse hope into the cause of freedom. These are historical proofs of the great truth so superbly expressed by Lowell:

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages

but record

One death—grapple in the darkness, 'twixt old systems and the Word;

Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,

Yes that scaffold sways the future, and, behind  
the dim unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow.

Truly, if ever within the shadow of a great cause, God stood

"Keeping watch above his own,"

it was during that mighty contest over African slavery which was waged in the United States from Washington to Lincoln. And it is my faith that "within the shadow" of the great cause of the Negro people in this country, He still

stands, and will yet confirm the beautiful creed of Tennyson

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God has made the pile complete.

Recently a member of Congress, who seems to wish to undo what it took nearly a century to accomplish, referred to the question of Negro citizenship and Negro suffrage as one which involved "the greatest problem in the domestic life of the Republic." If he will read his country's history correctly, he will discover that, after the great problem of the formation of the government was partially solved, the sole and only great problem in the domestic life of the Republic related to the freedom and enfranchisement of the African peoples who lived within its borders; that all of the efforts to defeat these in the shape of compromise, evasion and defiance came to naught, and that the men and forces that have arrayed themselves against the realization of the principles of the Declaration of Independence are not among the most pleasing and illustrious recollections of the Republic.

The conflict with slavery in the United States was one of the most stupendous ever waged in the history of the world. It was not simply a MORAL conflict. Had it been only such, it would have been shortlived and the issue plainly seen from the beginning. It was more than a POLITICAL conflict. That its political character added to its stubbornness, is plainly evident; for the political advantage or disadvantage which it was to sections, parties and men, rendered it difficult to deal with in a popular form of government. Clay's geographical compromises, like Webster's 7th of March speech, testify to its great political bearing. Ambition and the desire for power often play havoc with a great cause. Slavery could satisfy the one and bestow the other. Into this temptation fell many of whom the world has said:

"Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,  
One tasked more declined, one more footpath untrod,  
One more devil's triumph and sorrow for angels,  
One wrong more to man; one more insult to God."

Neither was slavery simply an economic question. It was indeed decidedly such. Slave labor was a very persistent and reckonable factor in the history of America from the settlement of Jamestown to the surrender at Appomattox. It had cultivated and ruined farms; it had built magnificent cities and highways; it had created and nurtured a pampered, careless and soulless aristocracy which guarded jealously its privileges and its power; it had also enriched a large trading element of the population and was therefore tied to the purse-strings of the Republic, which made it a dangerous thing to fool with. In short, slavery ramified the whole scheme of a large and powerful section of the nation—from the dressing room and parlor of the mansion house to the cotton-gin and tobacco barn of the plantation. It was entrenched behind law, custom, contract, and cupidity. The force which attacks such a citadel must be powerful, indeed, if it expects to take it.

The conflict embraced all of these considerations—moral, political, economic and social. It involved one more element, which was of the very first importance—the element of RACE. From the morning of the world, when the curtain of history begins to rise upon the activities and struggles of men, down to the present moment, the element of racial difference has been a perennial and persistent cause of conflict. Wherever we view it, whether along the Nile, upon the shores of the Mediterranean, at Quebec, or at Vladivostok, it is the same inexorable and persistent force, which cannot be ignored and must be reckoned with. White servitude in America was bound naturally to disappear sooner or later, but the spirit which would exploit the African was not to be broken, except by a cataclysm brought about by the union of the two unconquerable forces of Freedom and Necessity.

Such then was the nature of the slavery conflict which occupied the stage of American politics from the establishment of the Ordinance of 1787 to the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment, whereon men would act their parts and pass away while the play went on awaiting its protagonist. The contest was engaged in by men of varied temperaments,

varied qualities of soul and head, and of varied ambitions. It called for the display of the highest forms of judgement, cunning, heroism and sacrifice. Its rewards were honor, fame, ostracism, and death.

It is natural that, in contemplating the great struggle, the mind should be prone to dwell long and reverently upon those who, scorning

"the soft and flowery words"

of fame, gave themselves unreservedly to the moral side of the conflict and thus gave to their country and to their age the sweetest memories and the most lasting embellishment. What a galaxy of Heroes, Great Spirits, and Martyrs they make! Lundy, Lovejoy, Garrison, Phillips, Sumner, and John Brown!

That was an ominous day for the slave system, when Garrison, out of the deep consecration of his soul to the moral cause, cried out: "I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or write with moderation. Urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single step—AND I WILL BE HEARD."

Than this, there is nothing finer in all history.

"He would be the tongue of this wide land  
Must string his harp with chords of sturdy iron,  
And strike it with a toil-imbrowned hand."

But the moral Crusader alone was impotent against the powerful octopus of oppression and greed.

About three months after this fine fulmination of Garrison, Abraham Lincoln, a tall, thoughtful, dreamy youth, went forth upon the western prairie in search of employment. This he found in the shape of helper on a flat-boat which was making its way over the western rivers to New Orleans, then the metropolis of the southwest and the most dreadful slave mart in the world. Here he beheld slavery in its most loathsome form. William H. Herndon, his law partner and life long friend, thus tells the story of what happened as related by his companion on his trip:

"At that time and place, Lincoln was made an anti-slavery man. He saw a slave, a beautiful mulatto girl, sold at auction. She was felt over, pinched, trotted around to show to the bidders that the said article was sound etc. Lincoln walked away from that sad inhuman scene with a deep feeling of unsmotherable hate. He said to John Hanks this: "By God! if ever I get a chance to hit that institution, I'll hit hard, John."

This incident in Lincoln's life has always impressed me profoundly, and the more I dwell upon it the more it seems to reveal the great dominant passion of his soul, and to explain his methods in his later career which to some may not seem so clear. Here was a soul that wanted A CHANCE to do a great good. At this time Lincoln was not very much versed in the political history of his country. He had perhaps become somewhat familiar with the career of Henry Clay, his early beau-ideal of a statesman, and may have had some appreciation of the adroit skill of this great political strategist. But here in the presence of this great infamy he saw instinctively, that its destruction would turn finally upon CHANCE, and his whole career is one of patient, cautious seeking for that chance.

Thus in 1831, in the third year of the "reign" of Andrew Jackson, Garrison—the Crusader—unfurled the "standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birth place of liberty," and standing in the gateway of the Louisiana country, and on the great highway of the West, which within a few years would be the battle ground of Slavery and Freedom, Abraham Lincoln, the future Emancipator, the practical politician, resolved if ever he got a chance to hit the institution of slavery, to "hit hard."

The election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency in 1828, was a most fortunate event for the cause of freedom. It marked a new epoch in the development of political and economic thought. Crude and rustic and attended by some of the coarse characteristics of frontierism, the transition, nevertheless, ushered in an era of robust health, of virility and strength, of radical though native initiative. In his

Commemoration Ode. Lowell says of Lincoln:

For him her old world moulds aside she threw,  
 And choosing sweet clay from the breast  
 Of the unexhausted West,  
 With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,  
 Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.

While this estimate is especially applicable to Lincoln, it is in general true of the men of the Jacksonian epoch. They were of a new and refreshing brand of statemanship—representatives of the New West, untrammelled by traditions and imbued with the hopes and the aspirations which the limitless area of the western wilderness and prairie awakened. The period of forty years of national life which preceded Jackson was guided by men whose ideas and thoughts were cast in the European mould. They had, after encountering many difficulties, successfully elaborated and put in operation the scheme of federal union BY THE METHOD OF COMPROMISE. They had averted appalling domestic and foreign dangers and had launched the Ship of State safely upon the bosom of a placid sea, whose bed was so mined with compromises and reservations as to awaken the most frightful alarms. They had, it is true, in the latter days of their regime received one recruit from the New West. Clay blazed the way for those who were to follow him. He had the dash and boldness of a Lochinvar, but in his zeal to pacify the differences of the East and South on the question of the tariff and slavery to the advantage of the West, he carried the spirit of compromise to the very verge of the precipice. Jackson with his rough and ready methods prevented the catastrophe. He cleared the ship of the old and skillful crew and with new men at the wheel and at the rigging steered for the open sea, to attack on the one side what he conceived to be the unscrupulous money power of the North and on the other, the real defiant slave-born sedition of the South.

Many circumstances combined to bring the slavery question into politics during the Jacksonian era. In 1831, Garrison, as already shown, sounded the alarm of emancipa-

tion and Nat Turner made Virginia quake. In 1833, the year of emancipation in the British Empire, the American Anti-Slavery Society was formed. In 1836, Calhoun and his band of extremists, who were beginning to take singular fright at every reference to slavery, actually popularized the slavery agitation by their ruthless attempt to gag it. The next year marks the Hegira of Fredrick Douglass and witnessed the murder of Elijah P. Lovejoy which brought Phillips into the anti-slavery arena. And in the same year, a few months before the martyrdom of Lovejoy, Abraham Lincoln introduced in the Illinois legislature a memorial for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

Here Lincoln took his first political position on the question of slavery. He was a very practical man. He never attempted the impossible. Some would make him a dreamer, who, under the spell of the consciousness of a great mission, looked athwart the future to some "far off divine event" in which he was to be the central figure. On the contrary, he was a very practical politician, who understood thoroughly the nature of the slavery question and knew just where and when to pick a chance to hit it. He was a man of a single issue which he was always quick to see and skillful in handling. With the Missouri Compromise holding in check the further extension of the system into the territories, he perceived that the chance for the friends of freedom was to attack the institution at the seat of the nation, over which Congress had full control and about which there was no iniquitous contract. When he went to Congress, he introduced a bill providing for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. It was a moderate measure, but so practical that even such a stanch abolitionist as Joshua R. Giddings supported it on the grounds that he was "willing to pay for slaves in order to save them from the southern market." Lincoln recognized that men had prejudices, that they were more often the victims of custom and tradition than of conscience and he always reckoned with these. In the very nature of the case, he had to oppose them, but he always endeavored to attack them at their weakest point.

The Abolitionists denied the right of property in slaves. Lincoln believed slavery was wrong, but if, by even recognizing the right of property in slaves, he could work the destruction of slavery, he was willing and ready to do so. When it came to choosing between theory and fact, he might respect the theory, but he would accept the fact, if by so doing he could manage to confer a benefit. Of course his bill died "on the table." He had tried his chance, but had lost his luck. In this same thirtieth Congress he voted, he says, forty-two times for the principles of the Wilmot Proviso. Those principles were also submerged. From the hall of Congress where he had sat in the company of Alexander Stephens and Robert Toombs, he went back to the west to gird himself to fight with their spirit and their machinations, before the nation.

Texas and the California country had become a part of the national domain and the hopes of the slave power beat high. It had brought on the war with Mexico for the very purpose of destroying the effects of the compromise of 1820. At this juncture the South seemed to hold the winning hand which the North would be bold indeed to call. It was a time that tried men's souls—such a time as when patience

"Rocks restlessly and scares away all rest."

The political situation was shifting; party alignments were changing. Around the seething caldron of sectional strife and moral excitement, stood great men, those whose memories belonged to the past and those whose memories would be linked with the future. Calhoun, tottering on the brink of the grave, but as aggressive as ever; Benton, on the eve of paying the penalty for his moderate apostasy to slavery, but as inflexible as ever; Webster, near whom stood no prophetic voice warning him, "beware the ides of March;" Seward and Chase, exponents of the HIGHER LAW; and the central figure, Henry Clay, as adroit as ever, holding out the compromise of 1850 and uttering the following solemn words:

"I am expecting soon to go hence and owing no responsibility but to my own conscience and to my God."



The late Dr. Von Holst said, "the broad basis on which the compromise of 1850 rested, was the conviction of the great majority of the people both north and south, that it was fair, reasonable, and patriotic to come to a friendly understanding." Webster said on the fateful 7th of March, "there shall be no more agitation, these measures are a finality, and we will have peace." Stephen A. Douglas pronounced the slavery question dead. Lincoln said more truly that the slavery question could never be successfully compromised. He had diagnosed the disease and he also knew the patient. He saw that imbedded as it was in one part of the body politic, it must need to feed upon and finally devour the rest of the parts. But he was wise enough to await the experience of the medicine men.

The compromise of 1850 provided for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Thus one thing was gained. It also provided for a more stringent Anti-Slavery Law. Lincoln saw here that the South was beginning to overreach; that bloodhounds and slave catchers chasing through the free states, would be more powerful in the cause of freedom than all of the abolition societies. He saw too that the way the slavery business was arranged as to Mexico, would lead to complications or to unusual demands elsewhere. Above all, he knew that the slave barons, like all oppressors, were not capable of making a contract so far as it related to their peculiar institution. Lincoln was right and Webster and Douglas were wrong.

In 1854, Douglas resurrected his corpse by the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill whose passage repealed the Missouri Compromise. Lincoln's hour had come. He had lived his time; not with his usual patience to be sure. The South had violated a contract—an unconscionable contract it is true—made in her interest and at her dictation. He was filled with indignation not unlike that which came over him in the slave mart in New Orleans. Douglas was seeking to win the presidency by manacled the hands of Congress with in its own jurisdiction. Adopting as his motto, "A house

divided against itself cannot stand," Lincoln prepared to meet Douglas with the single issue of the right of Congress to legislate for the territories on the question of slavery. Here Lincoln took his second political position on the slavery question by becoming the leader of the anti-slavery party in the west.

In 1850 John Brown went to Kansas and the story of "Bleeding Kansas" was writ large in the Book of Freedom. "When" says Arnold, "the convulsions of the great national conflict began to shake the land, Kansas was the rock which rolled back the tide of the slave conspirators. All honor to Kansas." On March 5th two years later, the Dred Scott decision rang out over the nation "like a fire bell in the night." Consternation reigned in the anti-slavery camp. But the slave power had overreached at a point where retreat was impossible. When the first shock of consternation and shame had passed; when out of the sackcloth and ashes of the nation's great humiliation, the party of freedom awoke to the realization of the crisis, indignation and wrath were universal. Instinctively and prophetically, all eyes turned to the prairie of Illinois, where Lincoln, having rejected the dictum of Chief-Justice Taney, was debating the whole slavery question *de novo*.

The Lincoln-Douglas debates are the most memorable of anything of the kind in the history of party politics in the United States. They are too familiar to require review. The following considerations, however, should be born in mind:

Both men were candidates before the people of Illinois for the United States Senatorship, and, while the great discussion would center around the slavery question as it then stood, party advantage was not to be overlooked or forgotten.

The Republican Party had reached that stage of growth which set men to guessing.

Illinois had been staunchly and uniformly Democratic and enthusiastically loyal to Douglas, who was at that time the most conspicuous figure in national politics and the idol

of the northern wing of his party.

Lincoln, taking as his starting point the intention of the fathers of the Republic, sought to confine the issue to the right of Congress to legislate for the territories in disregard of the clamor of the slave power and the dictum of the Supreme Court.

Douglas, an acrobat in politics, a shrewd dialectician, resourceful, aware of the prejudices of the masses of the people and of their careless and temporizing attitude, sought to involve and confuse the issue by extraneous and irrelevant matters. He represented (it was to his immediate political interest to do so) Lincoln as seditiously rejecting the decision of the Supreme Court, at the same time injecting into the debates the acid of Negro suffrage, the social equality of the races, amalgamation and other such political clap-trap, which before and since, men, anxious for political preferment, have resorted to for the purpose of arousing prejudice and passion for the defeat of a just cause. The following is a sample of his tactics, which he employed at Ottawa, August 21, 1858:

"Mr. Lincoln, following the example and lead of all the little Abolition orators who go around and lecture in the basement of schools and churches, reads from the Declaration of Independence that all men were created equal, and then asks how can you deprive a Negro of that equality which God and the Declaration of Independence award to him? He and they maintain that Negro equality is guaranteed by the laws of God, and that it is asserted in the Declaration of Independence. If they think so, of course they have a right to say so, and so vote. I do not question Mr. Lincoln's conscientious belief that the Negro was made his equal, and, hence is his brother; but, for my own part, I do not regard the Negro as my equal, and positively deny that he is my brother or any kin to me whatever. Lincoln has evidently learned by heart Parson Lovejoy's catechism. He can repeat it as well as Farnsworth, and he is worthy of a medal from Father Giddings and Fred Douglass for his Abolitionism. He holds that the Negro was born his equal and

yours, and that he was endowed with equality by the Almighty, and that no human law can deprive him of these rights which were guaranteed to him by the Supreme Ruler of the universe."

But Mr. Lincoln never swerved and constantly kept the "Little Giant" in the ring, confronted with the main issue. Today in certain high places, where small but shrewd minds are evolving schemes for stripping the Negro of his guaranteed rights, there is great display of effort to prove that Lincoln thought the Negro unfit to enjoy the blessings which have come to him by virtue of Lincoln's wise statesmanship. Some, I believe, have tried to prove Job an infidel by extracts from the great Book of Faith. The men who are to-day praising and quoting Lincoln for the purpose of damning the Negro will be even less successful than such blasphemers.

Throughout the joint contest, Lincoln stood frankly and fearlessly by the creed which he had expressed at the Republican Convention of Illinois which put him forward as the competitor of Douglas for the Senate. The following was his creed:

"Gentlemen of the Convention: If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far on into the fifth year, since a policy was initiated, with the avowed object, and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation had not only not ceased, but was constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease, until a crisis shall have been reached, and passed. 'A house divided against itself can not stand.' I believe this government can not endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all

the states, old as well as new—North as well as South.”

Such was his creed, the expression of which aroused both the North and the South. This remarkable speech he closed with the following expression of the faith in the Anti-slavery party:

“The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail— if we stand firm, we shall not fail. WISE COUNSELS may ACCELERATE or MISTAKES delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is SURE to come.”

And yet temporarily Lincoln had failed. Douglas went back to the Senate. The Great Arbiter of man's destiny was holding him in reserve. His reelection to the thirty-first Congress—the Congress of the compromise of 1850—might have put him in great peril, and now in 1858, it was perhaps fortunate for him and for the cause of freedom that Douglas overcame him in a popular election.

“God a blessing gave,  
And saved the man who sought to save.”

The following year John Brown went to Virginia to precipitate the crisis, and in the great and wonderful shadow of his martyrdom, the friends of freedom and emancipation turned to the tall, sad-faced man of the prairie, and into his hands placed with solemn confidence their standard, for

“the hour supreme had come.”

The ship of state was drifting; the issues changed and shifted like the gales of the northern sea. Lincoln saw straight to the mark. Slavery's last desperate play was to destroy the Union in order to maintain itself, and Lincoln sounded the slogan for the PRESERVATION of the Union. This was his THIRD political position on the slavery question. He saw through the tricks and “sophistical contrivances” of his time and perceived that the preservation of the Union was inseparable from the undoing of slavery. He saw approaching over a rugged, dangerous, and uncertain track the CHANCE for which he had so long waited.

On the 11th of February 1861, the day preceding his fifty-second birthday, Lincoln bade a touching farewell to his friends and neighbors of Springfield. “I know not,” he said,

"how soon I shall see you again. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington." The 4th of the next month, he stood at the eastern colonnade of the Capitol and spoke to the American people the most weighty words that ever fell from his lips. Forty years before, he had floated down the Mississippi on a flat-boat to New Orleans and there had resolved to hit the slave system hard, if ever he got a chance. Was this the CHANCE? Close to him pressed the friends of freedom. Looking into the faces of Sumner, Seward, Chase, Wade and other champions of the great cause, he took the oath to OBEY the constitution and to PRESERVE the Union, at the hands of the Jurist who wrote the Dred Scott decision. Close by also stood the spirit of discord, and in the distance his prophetic ear heard the mutterings of treason.

Soon there crashed over Sumpter the volley that signalized the beginning of the end of the great drama. Treason had done its worst. It had thrown down the glove which was picked up by a champion whose strength lay hidden deep in the silence of his wise and determined soul. Sad and trying days followed. The spirit of the people was depressed. McClellan's delays were as the chilling autumn frost; Bull Run was as the blast of winter. Then the giant soul of the nation, guided by the calm, resolute, cautious pilot that stood at the wheel, roused itself. You know the rest!

But what of this man of CHANCE? Would he ever see it? Would he ever avail himself of it? Lincoln's ordeal was not the reverses of the field of battle, not the sufferings of the march and the camp, not alone the lamentations of the Rachels who would not be comforted. Trying as were these, they were the natural accompaniments of the war. The Abolitionists were losing faith in him. That surely added to the tinge of Lincoln's sadness. He was a man susceptible of the pleasure and the pain which come from the trust or distrust of friends. Whether in the White House or in the cabin, man's supremest joy and support are the trust and confidence of his friends—those who would have him do and be the best his talents and opportunities permit. There

was a time in Lincoln's life when he seemed to feel the want of this all-sustaining power. "Strike", said the Abolitionists: "You dare", replied the border-states and the spirit of the draft riots. Horace Greeley, ever zealous, impulsive, and blundering, published in the New York Tribune, which never supported him heartily, that "Prayer of Twenty Millions of People", which was a pure exaggeration. But so eminent was the source and so critical the issue which it raised, that Lincoln had to break the silence with the almost sphinx-like utterance:

"My paramount object is to save the Union and not either to save or destroy slavery."

This was in August 1862 when he had already drafted the Proclamation of Emancipation. He knew too well the truth that

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads to fortune"

and that

"We must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures."

This was not the flood-tide nor did the current serve.

Lee began his march to the North. Lincoln went to live at Soldiers' Home. He made a solemn vow to God that if Lee was driven back, he would issue the proclamation of freedom. The battle of Antietam registered the flood of the tide. His CHANCE had come. He struck the blow and "hit hard." Freedom was accomplished. The patient man, the wise, farseeing man, the practical, politician, took his FOURTH and LAST political position on the question of slavery, and settled the agitation forever.

Lincoln's act was the most eventful step in the march of freedom ever taken. It was an incident of the world's greatest war—a war between two sections of the English race over the enslavement of a different race, the like of which had never occurred before in the history of the world. And the act was done by a descendant of the Mayflower, who thereby became the most illustrious man of his age

"The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,  
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

Nearly a half century has elapsed since this most important act of the nineteenth century was performed. The intervening years have been marked by marvelous changes and achievements. The one and only great issue that for the previous seventy-five years had divided the people and threatened the success of the attempt to erect on these shores the greatest republic of free men in the history of the world is settled. That issue is now dead beyond the possibility of man, or a party of men or any section to revive, and they whose lives and conduct are influenced by either the fears or the hopes of its resurrection are groping among the sepulchers. Its passing marked one of those moral triumphs which in political history lift mankind in respect to ideas and government to a plane from which there can be no descent. From such a plane the world has always forgot the old strifes and proceeded to blaze new paths of progress.

From thirty odd prostrate and almost shattered states, our nation has become a world power, an empire. Its flag and its influence are dominant the world over. From twenty-five millions of people, broken and distressed, yet cemented and welded together by a cleansing fire, we have grown to nearly a hundred millions composed of varied races, all loyal to the flag and its institutions. Our expansion has been too rapid for measurement. When in 1860 began the contest which was to clear the stage for future achievement and development, there were but little more than thirty thousand miles of railway in our borders and our commercial methods were almost as simple as the alphabet. Today we have more than three hundred thousand miles of railway, almost twice as great as that of Great Britain, European and Asiatic Russia, Germany, and France combined, and gigantic commercial and financial forces which give rise to conditions and problems which our generation will not be able to meet and solve.

The people upon whom Lincoln's act bestowed the heritage of citizenship privileges and modern opportunities have increased from four to ten millions. They have become a tenth



of the population of a vast and mighty empire—but not a submerged tenth. Starting with no capital but property, ignorance, the habits of toil and the hopes of children, they have piled up more than a billion dollars of wealth, operating nearly a million farms which aggregate nearly fifty million acres and have grown in intelligence so that about sixty out of every hundred can read and write. They are participants in and agents of the greatest government of the world. They share in common with the millions of men of the races of the world the great and solemn privilege of helping to do the world's work, solve the world's problems and control the world's destiny—proud of the heritage of American citizenship. If at times they feel that they have not yet attained, let them remember that neither has the world, neither have those who have a thousand years the start. And let them not become discouraged and bitter and out of touch with the practical and hopeful forces that make for progress.

Hegel has said "the History of the world is not the theatre of happiness. The pages of happiness are blank pages in it." The issue of the Civil War in the United States might have been expected to usher in that period of harmony, when the nation might find itself in the condition of glorious achievement, of universal Freedom realized, of the Union preserved and so might have enjoyed that condition. Liberty however is a costly boon. Eternal vigilance is the price of it. Not since the act of Lincoln has it been possible for the guardians of freedom to lay aside their vigilance. The emancipation of the Negro from chattel slavery marks simply the shifting of the issue in the great task of lifting the race to the lawful verge of manhood." Never in the history of the race has the cause for vigilance been greater than it is to day. **WITHIN**—among ourselves—are great duties, which must be fulfilled, great problems, the factors of which are ourselves; common aspirations, the realization of which requires, and will continue to require, the highest form of union and accord; the consciousness of a common aim and a common destiny, yet differences of method which call for the broadest charity and the largest patience. **WITHOUT** are strong, aggressive and resourceful forces, boastful-

ly but vainly threatening to undo what has been done, or to defeat further achievement.

WITHIN too—among ourselves, are dangers, born of ambition, jealousies, vanities, and honest stupidity, which cause us often to bend the knee, to bear the back, and even give away the game. But both WITHIN and WITHOUT are great beneficent forces, as Wadsworth puts it, “great allies,” which are making for real and lasting progress in the direction of right and justice.

Let us then have the sense to cherish, nurture, and hold fast to the strong radical forces that rise up within and without to help us; the judgement to respect the worth of the calm, slow but safe, conservative agencies that work to the same end; and the wisdom and the foresight to see that opposing powers will inevitably overreach. Above all let us not dally.

“From this day forth we shall know,  
That in ourselves our safety must be sought;  
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;  
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.”

Yet Lincoln’s great act will have been performed in vain if we fail to measure up to the full stature of American citizenship which it made possible. The obligations and duties which we are to meet and perform are the same as those which are common to all citizens of the Republic. There are, it is true, certain duties and problems that relate in a peculiar sense to us from whom the inheritance was long withheld, and these must be frankly, sanely and heroically met and solved; but because of these we must not ourselves become blind and, above all, we must not suffer others to blind us, to the weightier duties and the larger opportunities of American citizenship and American life.

Nothing touching the present life and the future destiny of the Republic can be foreign to us. Any arbitrary attempt by either statute, custom or concert to alienate us from the common current of American life and the common endeavors of American citizenship can never find acquiescence among us. By virtue of birth, burdens, training and ideas, we are an in-

tegral part of a composite whole, and such we must ever be, not by boasting and loud protesting—though calm, strong and manly protest should not be lacking when occasion demands—but by our lives, our services and our ideals.

We are Americans, proud of the achievements and institutions which exalt our country, deploring whatever in the present or in the past detracts from its glory, and moved by the incentives which prompt all who live under the protection of the stars and stripes. We emphatically insist upon the truth of the fact stated more than fifty years ago by the late venerable Alexander Crummell—a fact even more true now than then:—"Our civilization, in its elements, is that of the world's Christendom; and it springs upward, in all its legitimate tendencies, unerringly as the rustling pinions of a returning angel to the skies. Our language is that of the foremost men of all the earth; and it makes as our inheritance, although of other blood and race than theirs, the large common sense, the strong practicalness, the pure and lofty morals, the genuine philanthropy, the noble wisdom, and all the treasures of thought and genius, with which England has blessed the world:—

"We speak the language Shakespear spake;  
The faith and morals hold which Milton held."

And so, we face hopefully the future, imbued with the spirit of him, the centennial of whose birth we in common with our fellow citizens throughout the length and breadth of the Republic commemorate today, who in all the crises of his life

"Knew to bide his time,  
Still patient in his faith sublime,  
Till the wise years decide."













WERT  
BOOKBINDING  
Cranville, Pa  
Jan Feb 1989  
D. W. B. B.

